U.S. Jury Dismisses Defamation Suit Of Ex-CIA Agent Against His Superior

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A U.S. District Court jury in Alexandria took 45 minutes yesterday to dismiss a $2 million defamation of character suit brought by a former CIA agent against his one-time supervisor.

C. Philip Liechty, who was fired by the CIA in 1978 during its economy-oriented reduction in personnel, sought damages against current high-level CIA employe Robert F. Bodroghy.

Liechty was in the news last December when he told reporters the CIA had for years covered up information about U.S. congressmen taking financial and sexual bribes from South Korean officials. A deposition detailing those allegations in Liechty's suit against Bodroghy was ordered sealed by a federal judge and did not figure in trial testimony.

Liechty accused Bodroghy, one of his supervisors while the two worked in Korea in the early 1970s, of giving slanderous statements to a Montgomery County social worker who was investigating a child custody contest between Liechty and his wife. The Liechtys are now divorced.

In a manner not revealed in court testimony, Bodroghy's confidential remarks to the social worker became public. They were said to concern threats Liechty allegedly made against unnamed CIA officials during his dismissal hearings two years ago.

Liechty argued that Bodroghy's comments were part of an effort to drum him out of the agency.

Defense witnesses, including Liechty's former wife, described him as a zealot who frequently railed against his superiors, threatening to "blast anyone" who interfered with his work and at one point vowing to

"I heard him say several times he was going to blast someone or going to get a gun and kill someone in a fit of temper," said Lawrence Schoeps, who worked with Liechty in Washington in 1978.

"The 'blasting' thing was a constant repetition in the office," said Schoeps. "He seemed to have a gripe about everyone. It covered so many people, it was unbelievable."

Liechty denied he had ever threatened anyone.

At one point he was asked about a gun collection that allegedly numbered 200 firearms. Liechty said he never had that many and that he had disposed of many he did have.

"I thought this kind of smear was coming and got rid of them," he said.

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Liechty told the court that from his first tour of overseas duty in Southeast Asia 10 years ago he found CIA reports misrepresentative. "After coming on the scene, I found things totally different from the way they had been reported."